

MAY 19 2008

**IN THE CLAIMS:**

1. (Currently amended) A system for placement of an anchor in an animal subject, comprising:

a pair of anchor extensions engageable to the animal subject, each anchor extension including a proximal end and a distal end, said distal ends forming an alignment axis therebetween when engaged to the animal subject; and

a guide instrument mountable adjacent said proximal ends of said pair of anchor extensions, said guide instrument including a guide member defining a guide axis intersecting said alignment axis when mounted to said pair of anchor extensions, wherein said guide member is rotatable around said proximal ends of said anchor extensions while mounted thereto to reposition said guide axis relative to said anchor extensions while maintaining said guide axis in intersecting relation with said alignment axis, wherein said guide instrument includes a mounting assembly coupled with said guide member, said mounting assembly being removably mounted to said pair of anchor extensions and said mounting assembly includes a mounting member and a coupling member rotatably mounted to and extending proximally from said mounting member, said mounting member being removably mounted between said pair of anchor extensions along a mounting axis, wherein said guide member is coupled to said coupling member at a hinge, and said hinge is offset proximally from said proximal ends of said pair of anchor extensions so that coupling member is rotatable 360 degrees around said mounting member when said mounting member is mounted between said pair of anchor extensions.

2. (Original) The system of claim 1, further comprising an inserter including a proximal portion pivotally mountable adjacent said proximal ends of said pair of anchor extensions and a distal portion extending transversely to said proximal portion, said distal portion being movable about said proximal ends of said pair of anchor extensions by pivoting said proximal portion relative thereto.

3. (Original) The system of claim 2, further comprising a connecting element releasably engageable to said distal portion of said inserter, said connecting element being positionable along said alignment axis with said inserter.

4. (Original) The system of claim 3, wherein said connecting element is a rod.

5. (Original) The system of claim 3, further comprising a pair of anchors each including a distal portion engageable to a bony segment of the animal subject, said pair of anchors further each including a proximal receiver portion defining a passageway alignable along the alignment axis, said pair of anchor extensions being mountable with a corresponding one of said receiver portions of said anchors.

6. (Original) The system of claim 5, wherein said pair of anchors are multi-axial screws.

Claims 7-8 (Cancelled)

9. (Previously presented) The system of claim 1, wherein said coupling member is removably mounted to said mounting member.

10. (Previously presented) The system of claim 1, wherein said guide member is pivotally coupled to said coupling member about a hinge axis offset from said mounting axis.

11. (Original) The system of claim 10, wherein said guide member includes a bore extending along said guide axis.

12. (Previously presented) The system of claim 1, wherein said coupling member is rotatably and removably coupled to said mounting member with a mounting pin extending through a bore of said mounting member, said bore extending along said mounting axis.

13. (Currently amended) ~~The system of claim 12, wherein~~ A system for placement of an anchor in an animal subject, comprising:

a pair of anchor extensions engageable to the animal subject, each anchor extension including a proximal end and a distal end, said distal ends forming an alignment axis therebetween when engaged to the animal subject;

a guide instrument mountable adjacent said proximal ends of said pair of anchor extensions, said guide instrument including a guide member defining a guide axis intersecting said alignment axis when mounted to said pair of anchor extensions, wherein said guide member is rotatable around said proximal ends of said anchor extensions while mounted thereto to reposition said guide axis relative to said anchor extensions while maintaining said guide axis in intersecting relation with said alignment axis, wherein said guide instrument includes a mounting assembly coupled with said guide member, said mounting assembly being removably mounted to said pair of anchor extensions and said mounting assembly includes a mounting member and a coupling member rotatably mounted to and extending proximally from said mounting member, said mounting member being removably mounted between said pair of anchor extensions along a mounting axis, wherein:

said coupling member is rotatably and removably coupled to said mounting member with a mounting pin extending through a bore of said mounting member, said bore extending along said mounting axis; and

said mounting pin includes a distal portion positionable in said bore, said distal portion including a pair of longitudinal fingers and a slot between said fingers.

14. (Currently amended) The system of claim 13, wherein said pair of fingers each include a radial projection projecting engageable to said mounting member when said mounting pin is positioned through said bore.

Claim 15 (Cancelled)

16. (Currently amended) A system for placement of an anchor in an animal subject, comprising:

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a pair of anchor extensions engageable to the animal subject, each anchor extension including a proximal end and a distal end, said distal ends forming an alignment axis therebetween when engaged to the animal subject; and

a guide instrument mountable adjacent said proximal ends of said pair of anchor extensions, said guide instrument including a guide member defining a guide axis intersecting said alignment axis when mounted to said pair of anchor extensions, wherein said guide member is rotatable around said proximal ends of said anchor extensions while mounted thereto to reposition said guide axis relative to said anchor extensions while maintaining said guide axis in intersecting relation with said alignment axis, wherein said guide instrument includes a mounting assembly coupled with said guide member, said mounting assembly being removably mounted to said pair of anchor extensions and said mounting assembly is positionable about said proximal ends of said pair of anchor extensions and clampable thereto and said guide instrument includes a coupling member rotatably coupled to ~~said mounting assembly~~ adjacent said proximal end of one of said anchor extensions, said coupling member extending from said rotatable connection with said ~~mounting assembly~~ to a coupling portion, said guide member being rotatably coupled to said coupling portion of said coupling member.

#### Claims 17-45 (Cancelled)

46. (Currently amended) A system for placement of an anchor in an animal subject, comprising:

a pair of anchor extensions engageable to the animal subject, each anchor extension including a proximal end and a distal end, said distal ends forming an alignment axis therebetween when engaged to the animal subject;

a guide instrument mountable adjacent said proximal ends of said pair of anchor extensions, said guide instrument including a guide member defining a guide axis intersecting said alignment axis when mounted to said pair of anchor extensions, said guide member being movable relative to said pair of anchor extensions while maintaining said guide axis in intersecting relation with said alignment axis, wherein said guide instrument includes a mounting assembly coupled with said guide member, wherein:

said mounting assembly is removably mounted to said pair of anchor extensions;  
and

said mounting assembly includes a mounting member and a coupling member rotatably mounted to and extending proximally from said mounting member with said mounting member being removably mounted between said pair of anchor extensions along a mounting axis; and

said guide member is coupled to said coupling member at a location offset proximally of said proximal ends of said anchor extensions to permit said guide member to rotate 360 degrees around said mounting member when said mounting member is mounted between said pair of anchor extensions.

47. (Previously presented) The system of claim 46, wherein said coupling member is removably mounted to said mounting member.

48. (Previously presented) The system of claim 46, wherein said guide member is pivotally coupled to said coupling member about a hinge axis offset from said mounting axis.

49. (Previously presented) The system of claim 48, wherein said guide member includes a bore extending along said guide axis.

50. (Currently amended) The system of claim 46, wherein said coupling member is rotatably and ~~removably removable~~-coupled to said mounting member with a mounting pin extending through a bore of said mounting member, said bore extending along said mounting axis.

51. (Currently amended) ~~The system of claim 50, wherein~~ A system for placement of an anchor in an animal subject, comprising:

a pair of anchor extensions engageable to the animal subject, each anchor extension including a proximal end and a distal end, said distal ends forming an alignment axis therebetween when engaged to the animal subject;

a guide instrument mountable adjacent said proximal ends of said pair of anchor extensions, said guide instrument including a guide member defining a guide axis intersecting said alignment axis when mounted to said pair of anchor extensions, said guide member being movable relative to said pair of anchor extensions while maintaining said guide axis in intersecting relation with said alignment axis, wherein said guide instrument includes a mounting assembly coupled with said guide member, wherein:

said mounting assembly is removably mounted to said pair of anchor extensions;

said mounting assembly includes a mounting member and a coupling member rotatably mounted to and extending proximally from said mounting member with said mounting member being removably mounted between said pair of anchor extensions along a mounting axis;

said coupling member is rotatably and removable coupled to said mounting member with a mounting pin extending through a bore of said mounting member, said bore extending along said mounting axis; and

said mounting pin includes a distal portion positionable in said bore, said distal portion including a pair of longitudinal fingers and a slot between said fingers.

52. (Currently amended) The system of claim 51, wherein said pair of fingers each include a radial projection projecting-engageable to said mounting member when said mounting pin is positioned through said bore.

53. (Previously presented) The system of claim 46, further comprising an inserter including a proximal portion pivotally mountable adjacent said proximal ends of said pair of anchor extensions and a distal portion extending transversely to said proximal portion, said distal portion being movable about said proximal ends of said pair of anchor extensions by pivoting said proximal portion relative thereto.

54. (Previously presented) The system of claim 53, further comprising a connecting element releasably engageable to said distal portion of said inserter, said connecting element being positionable along said alignment axis with said inserter.

55. (Previously presented) The system of claim 54, wherein said connecting element is a rod.

56. (Previously presented) The system of claim 55, further comprising a pair of anchors each including a distal portion engageable to a bony segment of the animal subject, said pair of anchors further each including a proximal receiver portion defining a passageway alignable along the alignment axis, said pair of anchor extensions being mountable with a corresponding one of said receiver portions of said anchors.

57. (Previously presented) The system of claim 56, wherein said pair of anchors are multi-axial screws.

58. (Currently amended) A system for placement of an anchor in an animal subject, comprising:

a pair of anchor extensions engageable to the animal subject, each anchor extension including a proximal end and a distal end, said distal ends forming an alignment axis therebetween when engaged to the animal subject; and

a guide instrument mountable adjacent said proximal ends of said pair of anchor extensions, said guide instrument including a guide member defining a guide axis intersecting said alignment axis when mounted to said pair of anchor extensions, said guide member being movable relative to said pair of anchor extensions while maintaining said guide axis in intersecting relation with said alignment axis, wherein said guide instrument includes a mounting assembly coupled with said guide member and said mounting assembly is removably mounted to and positionable about said proximal ends of said pair of anchor extensions and clampable thereto, wherein said guide instrument includes a coupling member rotatably coupled to said mounting assembly adjacent said proximal end of one of said anchor extensions, said coupling member extending from said rotatable connection with said mounting assembly to a coupling portion, said guide member being rotatably coupled to said coupling portion of said coupling member.

Claim 59 (Cancelled)

60. (Previously presented) The system of claim 58, further comprising an inserter including a proximal portion pivotally mountable adjacent said proximal ends of said pair of anchor extensions and a distal portion extending transversely to said proximal portion, said distal portion being movable about said proximal ends of said pair of anchor extensions by pivoting said proximal portion relative thereto.

61. (Previously presented) The system of claim 60, further comprising a connecting element releasably engageable to said distal portion of said inserter, said connecting element being positionable along said alignment axis with said inserter.

62. (Previously presented) The system of claim 61, wherein said connecting element is a rod.

63. (Previously presented) The system of claim 61, further comprising a pair of anchors each including a distal portion engageable to a bony segment of the animal subject, said pair of anchors further each including a proximal receiver portion defining a passageway alignable along the alignment axis, said pair of anchor extensions being mountable with a corresponding one of said receiver portions of said anchors.

64. (Previously presented) The system of claim 63, wherein said pair of anchors are multi-axial screws.

Claims 65-66 (Cancelled)

67. (Currently amended) A system for placement of an anchor in an animal subject, comprising:



a pair of anchor extensions engageable to the animal subject, each anchor extension including a proximal end and a distal end, said distal ends forming an alignment axis therebetween when engaged to the animal subject; and

a guide instrument mounted to said anchor extensions adjacent to said proximal ends of said pair of anchor extensions, said guide instrument including a guide member defining a guide axis intersecting said alignment axis when mounted to said pair of anchor extensions, wherein said guide member is movable relative to said proximal ends of said anchor extensions while mounted thereto to reposition said guide axis relative to said anchor extensions while maintaining said guide axis in intersecting relation with said alignment axis, wherein said guide instrument includes a mounting assembly coupled with said guide member, said mounting assembly being removably mounted to said pair of anchor extensions and said mounting assembly includes a mounting member and a coupling member rotatably mounted to and extending proximally from said mounting member, said mounting member being removably mounted between said pair of anchor extensions along a mounting axis, wherein said guide member is coupled to said coupling member at a location offset proximally of said proximal ends of said anchor extensions to permit said guide member to rotate 360 degrees around said mounting member when said mounting member is mounted between said pair of anchor extensions.

68. (Previously presented) The system of claim 67, wherein said coupling member is removably mounted to said mounting member.

69. (Previously presented) The system of claim 67, wherein said guide member is pivotally coupled to said coupling member about a hinge axis offset from said mounting axis.

70. (Previously presented) The system of claim 69, wherein said guide member includes a bore extending along said guide axis.

71. (Currently amended) The system of claim 67, wherein said coupling member is rotatably and removably ~~removable~~-coupled to said mounting member with a mounting pin

extending through a bore of said mounting member, said bore extending along said mounting axis.

72. (Currently amended) ~~The system of claim 71, wherein~~ A system for placement of an anchor in an animal subject, comprising:

a pair of anchor extensions engageable to the animal subject, each anchor extension including a proximal end and a distal end, said distal ends forming an alignment axis therebetween when engaged to the animal subject;

a guide instrument mounted to said anchor extensions adjacent to said proximal ends of said pair of anchor extensions, said guide instrument including a guide member defining a guide axis intersecting said alignment axis when mounted to said pair of anchor extensions, wherein said guide member is movable relative to said proximal ends of said anchor extensions while mounted thereto to reposition said guide axis relative to said anchor extensions while maintaining said guide axis in intersecting relation with said alignment axis, wherein said guide instrument includes a mounting assembly coupled with said guide member, said mounting assembly being removably mounted to said pair of anchor extensions and said mounting assembly includes a mounting member and a coupling member rotatably mounted to and extending proximally from said mounting member, said mounting member being removably mounted between said pair of anchor extensions along a mounting axis, wherein:

said coupling member is rotatably and removably coupled to said mounting member with a mounting pin extending through a bore of said mounting member, said bore extending along said mounting axis; and

said mounting pin includes a distal portion positionable in said bore, said distal portion including a pair of longitudinal fingers and a slot between said fingers.

Claim 73 (Cancelled)

74. (Currently amended) A system for placement of an anchor in an animal subject, comprising:

a pair of anchor extensions engageable to the animal subject, each anchor extension including a proximal end and a distal end, said distal ends forming an alignment axis therebetween when engaged to the animal subject; and

a guide instrument mounted to said anchor extensions adjacent to said proximal ends of said pair of anchor extensions, said guide instrument including a guide member defining a guide axis intersecting said alignment axis when mounted to said pair of anchor extensions, wherein said guide member is movable relative to said proximal ends of said anchor extensions while mounted thereto to reposition said guide axis relative to said anchor extensions while maintaining said guide axis in intersecting relation with said alignment axis, wherein said guide instrument includes a mounting assembly coupled with said guide member, said mounting assembly being removably mounted to said pair of anchor extensions and said mounting assembly is positionable about said proximal ends of said pair of anchor extensions and clampable thereto and said guide instrument includes a coupling member rotatably coupled to said mounting assembly adjacent said proximal end of one of said anchor extensions, said coupling member extending from said rotatable connection with said mounting assembly to a coupling portion, said guide member being rotatably coupled to said coupling portion of said coupling member.